

# JUSTIFICATION, PROPITIATION, DECLARATION

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A SERMON  
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*“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:  
Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood,  
to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;  
To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness:  
that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”  
Romans 3:24-26*

I think, dear friends, some of you will be saying, “There is that same old doctrine again that we are so continually hearing,” and I am sure if you do say it I shall not be surprised. Nor, on the other hand, shall I make any sort of excuse. The doctrine of justification by faith through the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ is very much to my ministry what bread and salt are to the table. As often as ever the table is set, there are those necessary things.

I regard that doctrine as being one that is to be preached continually, to be mixed up with all our discourses, even as, under the law it was said, “With all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt.” This is the very salt of the Gospel. Indeed, it is impossible to bring it forward too often. It is the soul-saving doctrine—it is the foundation doctrine of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is that by which God is pleased to bring many into reconciliation with Himself.

As the schoolmaster takes care to ground his scholars well in grammar, that they may get hold of the very roots of the language, so must we be rooted and grounded in this fundamental and cardinal truth of justification through the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Martin Luther, who used to preach this doctrine very vehemently and forcibly, yet declared that he felt as if he could knock the Bible about the peoples’ heads if he could by any means get this doctrine into them—for as soon after they had learnt it did they forget it.

Over and over, and over again must the Christian minister continue to insist upon this truth—that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. And forever and ever, as long as the world stands, must he continue to repeat the truth, that we are justified through the righteousness of our Redeemer and not by any righteousness of our own.

I do not intend at this time to try and preach a sermon, but rather give an “outline exposition” again of this doctrine. And if you turn to the text, I think we can very well divide it, and very properly, too, into three parts, and head it with three words of, justification, propitiation, declaration. *Justification*—“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” *Propitiation*—“Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins.” And then we come to the third—the *Declaration*—to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God: to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that he might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

First, then, here is something about—

### I. JUSTIFICATION.

The sense of this term is, in this place, and in most others, to declare a person to be just. A person is put on trial, he is brought before the judge. One of two things will happen—he will either be acquitted or

justified, or else he will be condemned. You and I are all virtually before the judge and we are at this moment either acquitted or condemned, either justified or under condemnation.

It is not possible that any one of us should be acquitted on the ground of our not being guilty, for we must all confess that we have broken the law of God ten thousand times. It is not possible for any of us to be declared just on the ground of our own personal obedience to the law, for to be just through our own obedience we must have been perfect—but perfect we have not been.

We have broken the law, we continue still to break it, and by the works of the law, it is clear we cannot be just, cannot be justified. The Lord, even the God of heaven and earth, has planned and promulgated a way by which He can be just, and yet can declare the guilty to be just—a way by which, to use the words of our text, He can be just and yet the justifier of him that believes.

That way is simply this, *a way of substitution and imputation*. Our sins are taken off of us and laid upon Christ Jesus, the innocent Substitute, “For he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin.” Then, when this is effected, the righteousness which was wrought out by Jesus Christ is taken from Him and imputed, reckoned unto us, so that the rest of the text comes true, “That we may be made the righteousness of God in him.”

We are found in Him not having our own righteousness which is of the law, but the righteousness which is of God by faith. You see, we did not keep the law, but broke it. We were, therefore, condemned. Jesus came and stood in our stead, headed up the whole race that He had chosen, became their representative, kept for them completely all the law, suffered also the punishment due for all their breaches of the law, becoming a substitute actively and passively obeying the law, and suffering its penalty too.

And now what He did is imputed to us, while what we did by way of sin was of old imputed to Him, and He was made a curse for us—as it is written, “Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.” If you ask me how this can be a just thing to do, I reply, God has determined it and it is not possible that He should have determined anything that was not just.

But moreover, there was an original reason for it, for our first ruin came upon us through our first parent, Adam. Our first fall was not our doing, but the doing of the man who stood as our representative. Perhaps had we, each one of us, at the first separately and distinctly sinned, without any connection with him, redemption might have been as impossible to us as we have reason to believe it is to fallen angels.

But inasmuch as the first sin was in connection with the federal headship of the first Adam, it became possible and right that there should be *a salvation through a second federal headship*, even Jesus Christ, the second Adam. “As by man came death, so by man also comes the resurrection from the dead.”

As by man sin came into the world and the race perished, so by the second glorious man, Christ Jesus, grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life. But you need not question the justice of the plan. The Sovereign against whom you have offended deigns to accept it—and what God accepts we need not hesitate to rely upon. If the offended One be satisfied to proclaim us just, we may be perfectly satisfied with what He shall do toward us, for if He justifies, who can condemn? If He acquits, who dare accuse? We may boldly say, if once we are acquitted, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?”

Now notice what the text says of this plan of justification. It tells us that, as far as we are concerned, *it is given to us freely*. Being justified freely, God forgives the sinner’s sins gratis, freely—not on account of any repentance of his meritoriously considered—not on the ground of any resolutions of his which might bribe the Eternal mind—not on account of penance, or suffering endured or to be endured, but He puts sins away freely because He chooses to do it—for nothing. Without money, without merit, without anything that could move Him but His own grand nature, for He delights in mercy—“Being justified freely.”

And then to make it clearer still, it is added, *by his grace*, which is not a tautology, though it is a repetition. We are justified, not by any debt due to us, not because God was bound to justify, but

because out of His own abundant love and rich compassion He freely makes the guilty to be pardoned and the unrighteous to be justified by the righteousness of Christ.

I know it has been said by some that we make out that there is no such thing as free pardon and free justification, because we set the righteousness of Christ in, as the procuring cause of both. I grant you we do, but we equally strenuously hold the pardon to be free, and the justification to be free, though it is through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus—free to us, free so far as the heart and mercy of God is concerned, and only through redemption, because God must be just, He must be righteous, He cannot separate sin from the penalty.

He is a Sovereign, but He never, in His sovereignty, violates righteousness. And it would be a sovereign act of unrighteousness if He passed by sin without awarding to it the punishment which He threatened should follow it—an act which it is not possible for God to do, for He must be just and He has Himself declared He will by no means clear the guilty. Still, the justification is free to you, free to every soul that will have it, free to every man that believes in Jesus.

Now note this justification is put before you as being *through the redemption*, which is in Christ Jesus. There is a price paid—it is through the redemption. There is an intervening suffering and an intervening obedience. We are not justified freely without redemption, nor justified by His grace without the intervention of the atoning sacrifice.

Oh! how men labor to get rid of this. There are certain persons who think themselves philosophic, who will do all they can to throw dirt into the face of this doctrine of substitution, but it is the very soul, head, foundation, corner, and keystone of the entire Gospel. If it be left out, I hesitate not to say that the Gospel preached is another gospel, which is not another, but there are some who trouble you.

*“In vain the guilty conscience seeks  
Some solid ground to rest upon;  
With vain desire the spirit breaks,  
Till we apply to Christ alone.*

*Till God in human flesh I see,  
My thoughts no comfort find;  
The holy, just, and sacred Three  
Are terrors to my mind.*

*But if Emmanuel’s face appear,  
My hope, my joy, begins;  
His grace forbids my slavish fear,  
His love removes my sins.”*

We cannot give up the doctrine of redemption, the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. This is it, soul—listen to it—you are justified freely, but it cost the Savior dearly. It cost Him a life of obedience. It cost Him a death of shame, of agony, of suffering—all immeasurable. There was your cup of wrath which you must drink forever, and which you could never drain to the bottom. It must be drunk by someone.

Jesus drinks it, sets the cup to His lips, and the very first drop of it makes Him sweat great drops of blood falling to the ground. But He drinks right on, though head, and hands, and feet are all suffering—drinks right on, though He cries, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Drinks right on, I say, until not one black drop or dreg could be found within that cup and turning it upside down, He cries, “It is finished. It is finished,” as He gives up the ghost.

At one tremendous draught of love, the Lord has drunk condemnation dry for every one of His people for whom He shed His blood. “Justified freely by his grace through the redemption which is in

Christ Jesus.” There was a redemption by substitutionary suffering, a redemption by vicarious obedience, a redemption by interposition of Christ on our behalf—

*“To bear, that we might never bear  
His Father’s righteous ire.”*

Understand you this, sinner? Understand you this? If you do not, then God help you to grasp it now, for it is a thing of the present—is it not here a present participle?—being justified freely, that is, *now*, *now* justified. O sinner, you are now condemned, but if you now will look to Jesus standing as the victim in your stead, if you will now trust in Jesus dying in your room—you shall be now just, your sins shall be now forgiven—the righteousness shall be yours now, and you shall know the meaning of that text, “There is, therefore, *now* no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” See you, then, what justification means? Oh! may you enjoy it. It will make you leap for joy if you do.

And now the second word is—

**II. PROPITIATION**—a reference here to the mercy seat, the covering in—in our own words it is a reconciliation, a something by which God is propitiated—an at-one-ment by which God and man are made one, a propitiation—a something which vindicates the injured honor of God, which comes in to make amends to the divine law for human offenses.

Now concerning this propitiation, let us speak, and may the Holy Spirit give us utterance. You say, O sinner, “Wherewithal shall I come before God? How shall I draw near to the Most High God?” What would you give to be saved? All that you have, you would freely present—if you had bullocks and sheep upon a thousand hills and their blood could cleanse you—you would pour it out in rivers. You ask again, “What is the propitiation I can bring?”

God tells you. Here He tells you that He has provided a propitiation in the person of His dear Son. And I would have you notice first of all *who it was that provided it*—whom God had set forth. Admire the love of this—that the God who was angered, is the God who finds the propitiation. Against God the sin was leveled. God Himself finds the way of being gracious towards sinners. How safe it must be to accept a propitiation which God, the offended one, Himself proposes.

Notice next that it is said that *God has set this forth*. The margin has it, “Has fore-ordained it.” The atonement of Christ is not a new idea—it is an old determination of the Most High and it is no close secret. God has published it—set it forth. By His prophets in His Word—by His preachers in all your streets—God has set forth Christ to be the propitiation for human sin. It is His own arranging, His own ordaining—and the publication to you tonight is by His own authority. Oh! regard you this and you that seek His mercy leap to think that it comes to you certified in such a way.

But then notice that *the main point in this propitiation is the blood*. “Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.” Some cannot bear to hear about the blood of Jesus and yet, under the old law it was written, “It is the blood which shall make atonement for sin.” And again, “Without shedding of blood there is no remission,” and again, “The blood is the life thereof,” and again, “When I see the blood I will pass over you,” that is to say, that which makes atonement for human sin is not the life of Christ as an example—nor the actions of Christ as a vindication of righteousness—but the suffering of Christ—the death of Christ.

Everyone knows that this is what is meant by the blood. In the blood-shedding, Jesus suffered—His body suffered—inwardly His soul bled, His spirit suffered—His soul-sufferings were the soul of His sufferings. Then came death. Death was the penalty of sin. Jesus died, literally died—and the heart’s blood came forth, mingled with water, from His pierced side.

God is pleased to pardon us because Jesus suffered, and the main point of comfort is the cross—the cross of the crucified, the dying Savior. Do not let your minds wander away from this, you that are seeking peace with God. Your hope is not so much at Bethlehem as at Calvary. Your consolation is not

to be found in the second advent, but in the first advent—and the death that closed it. You are not to look to Christ in His glory for your comfort, but to Christ in His humiliation. Christ in His expiatory sufferings as your only hope. The blood, the blood, the blood—it is there the propitiation lies—and to that our faith must turn our eye. It is so. Yes, it is so.

*“My sins deserve Thy wrath, my God;  
Thy wrath has fallen on Thy Son.”*

My sins turned away Your face—You have turned away Your face from Him. My sins deserved death—He has died. My sins deserved to be spit upon—to be mocked—to be cast out as felons. All this He has endured as if He were my sin, and is it not so? “He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

Brethren, I do protest my conscience never knew any peace until I understood this truth, and ever since then I have no rock I build on but this—Christ in my stead, and I in Christ’s place, safe in Him, and He was chastened, bruised, wounded, slain, instead of me. He it is. Propitiation through the blood.

But the text says, “*Through faith* in his blood.” So, then, this shows you that no propitiation has had any effect with regard to us until we have faith in the blood. I can never know that God has blotted out my sin until I have faith. And what is faith but trust? And then, when I trust the blood of Jesus, my sin is all forgiven me in one moment. When I humbly rely upon my Savior’s finished work, “Though my sins were as scarlet, they become as wool; though they were red like crimson, they are whiter than snow.”

Do you know—I hardly know how to talk about this propitiation truth. It makes my heart so leap for joy that I cannot find words to tell you. I do know that I, and that you, and that every believer under heaven, is as clear before God of every sin as if he had never sinned, and is before God as accepted as if his whole life had been perfect obedience—and all because that propitiation blood and the dear merits of our once crucified, but now glorified Redeemer stands in our place.

If I might have a perfect righteousness of my own, I would not—I would sooner have my Lord’s, for my righteousness, were it perfect, were but the righteousness of a man—but His is the righteousness of God and man, *God-Man*. Oh! it is not merely immaculate and complete—it overflows with merit. Truly I say again, could we have a righteousness of our own, it were wise to leave it and to have the righteousness of Jesus Christ wrapped about us by an act of faith, that we might forever stand accepted, but “*accepted in the Beloved*.” Why, it is the very glory of the acceptance that the acceptance comes to us in Christ.

Thus have I dwelt as well as our short time allows upon the propitiation. And now a word about—

### III. THE DECLARATION.

The great object, it appears, of the redemption, and of the Gospel, is to show how God is just, and yet the justifier of such as believe. And Paul very properly divides the effect of Christ’s death into two parts. First, he says that *that death declared God’s righteousness as to the sins that were past*, through the forbearance of God.

Before our Savior came into the world, there had passed over the world some thousands of years. Our chronology talks about four thousand years. I do not know that. I never did believe in the chronology which is appended by human judgment to our Bibles. It may be, or it may not be correct. However, it may be four thousand years.

During that time a very large number of sinners lived and a large number of sinners were saved. The transgressions of the patriarchs, the transgressions of Israel under the law, were remitted, and these persons were justified by faith, and accepted—but how? There had been no offering of blood. True, the bullocks and the lambs were offered, but these could never put away sin. These were brought often, as if to show that the work was not done. The text tells us that this was through the forbearance of God.

In the foresight of the atonement to be offered, God remitted—passed over, as the word is—the sins of those of His children who lived before Christ was sent—before the penalty was endured by the



Substitute. It is a glorious thought, this atonement of Christ acting forward, before it was finished, before it was presented—and multitudes entering heaven and enjoying felicity as Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the saints did, when, as yet not a drop of that blood which saved them had been shed, not a pang of the agony which made up the atonement had yet been endured.

Now had God passed over all this sin, and no atonement been after all presented, His justice would not have been declared, but our Savior ultimately coming and suffering all was a declaration of the righteousness of God concerning the sins that were past. It was proven that He had in His mind's eye this great sacrifice when He passed by sin—that He had not unjustly remitted it without demanding the penalty.

But then the apostle gives us the other half of the great result of Christ's death. He says, "To declare, I say, *at this time*, his righteousness." That is, today—while we read this passage. "To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that still as for us who live after the Passion, He might be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." The atoning sacrifice of Christ looks forward, and will look all down the ages till He comes.

***"His precious blood shall never lose its power  
Till all the ransomed church of God  
Be saved, to sin no more."***

All the sins of His people, both past and present and to come, were laid on Christ—the whole mighty mass of all the sin of all His people that ever have believed, or ever shall believe on Him—all were transferred to His head and laid on Him, and He suffered for them all, and made an end of all their transgressions, and brought in everlasting righteousness for them all. Here is the grand truth, the grandest truth of inspiration.

Now I shall spend the last few minutes of our time in reminding you that I have not, beloved, been beating about the bush, nor preaching to you a doctrine that may or may not be true. I have not been holding up to you some angle of an eccentric creed. Behold before you that which will be a savor of life unto life, or of death unto death. Not with words of man's wisdom, but in simplicity have I tried to tell you God's way of pardoning and justifying men. At your peril reject it.

As you shall answer for it before my Master's bar in that day when He shall summon you to give an account, oh! I beseech you by the living God—accept the propitiation which God sets forth. Here are no hard terms. Here are no rigorous conditions. There stand the words, "Believe and live." As it is written, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: he that believeth not shall be damned."

I have told you what this believing is. It is an unfeigned act of reliance upon the Incarnate God, suffering in your room, and place, and stead. If you believe on Him, or trust Him, that is the indisputable evidence that He was a substitute for you—that the load of your guilt is gone—that the stone that lay at the door is removed and you are saved.

Go not about, I pray you, to seek another righteousness. All the righteousness you want Christ presents you freely with. Do not say that you are guilty—it is true you are—but this mode of salvation was meant for the guilty. Demur not because you feel unfit. All the fitness that is wanted is that you do but confess you are unfit and take freely what God presents you. No sin of yours shall ruin you if you believe, but no righteousness of yours shall save you if you will not believe.

This is God's way to save men. Will you set up another? Will you dare play Antichrist with Christ? He has declared His righteousness in the substitution of the Savior. Do you fail to see that righteousness, or seeing it, will you not admire it? Will you not adopt the plan which manifests it? Accept it, sinner! It is all a brother's heart and voice can say, accept it.

Oh! if you knew the joy it would bring you, you would accept it now. I bear my witness personally. Burdened with sin, lost utterly, as much as you, I heard this gladsome news. I heard the message which said, "Look unto me and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth." I did look. I was as unfit as you—as

undeserving as you—but the moment my eye caught sight of the great surety on the ground of Gethsemane, bleeding for me, and on the cross dying for me—I saw that if God had punished Him for me, He could be just, and yet never punish me.

Nay, that if Christ were punished in my stead, to punish me after Christ had died for me would be injustice altogether. And I hide myself tonight beneath the wings of Jesus, the great Surety, and my only shelter in the storm—

*“Rock of Ages cleft for me,  
Let me hide myself in Thee.”*

In His riven side my soul does find a shelter from the blast of divine wrath. It is peace *now*. It is joy *now*. It is salvation *now* with me. Why should not it be so with you? You did not come here to find Him. No! but God brought you hither to find you. Is it not written, “I will call them a people who were not a people, and her beloved that was not beloved.”

“I am found,” says He, “of them that sought me not.” Oh! may He be found by you tonight. You did not know the way to be saved—you do know it now. Do not add to your guilt by knowing what you don’t practice, but now, *now* trust Him. Oh! may the Holy Ghost work faith in you.

“’Tis but a little faith,” says one. Little faith will save you, but Christ deserves great faith. Oh! He is a true Christ—He cannot lie. Oh! can you not lay hold of Him? Do you see but the hem of His garment? Is it but a raveled thread that hangs out? Touch it, touch it with your finger and you shall be made whole.

What if you cannot believe as you would? Believe as you can. Say with him of old, “Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.” Lift up the cry of the publican, “God be merciful—be propitiated—towards me, a sinner. Jesus, I will have Thee. Have Thou me.”

The Lord grant it, and may many in this place be saved tonight, to the praise and the glory of His grace wherein He has made us accepted in the Beloved. Amen and amen!

## EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

### JOHN 15:1-17

Thus speaks the Lord Jesus—

**Verse 1.** *I am the true vine,*

Many questions have been raised about which is the true church. The Savior answers them, “I am the true vine.” All who are united, really united, to the ever-living Savior are members of the true church. Find them where you may, if they are one with Christ, they are His—they are parts of the divine vine—they are belonging to His church.

**1.** *And my Father is the husbandman.*

It is the Father’s province, by the Holy Spirit and by the works of Providence, to see to the prosperity of the church. “My Father is the husbandman.” All preachers, all teachers are but, so to speak, the pruning tool in the hand of the great vinedresser. “My Father is the husbandman.”

**2.** *Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away:*

It is a necessary part of vine dressing to remove the superfluous shoots. Too much wood making which does not lead to fruit bearing is but a waste of strength. And so in the church there are those that bear no fruit and for a while, they appear to be fresh and green—and they who are the under-vinedressers dare not take them away. But the Father does it—sometimes by removing them by death, at other times by permitting them openly to expose their own character, until they are amenable to the discipline of the church and are removed.

**2.** *Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away and every branch that beareth fruit—*

What of that? “He purgeth it (prunes it) that it may bring forth more fruit.”

“I cannot understand” said one to me the other day, “why I am so very sorely afflicted. I have been searching myself to discover what sin can have been the cause of it.” Now, beloved, if that be your question tonight, there may be a sin to be put away, and if so, God forbid that I should prevent your searching. But remember, on the other hand, affliction is no evidence of sin, but oftentimes of the very contrary.

It is the fruit-bearing branch that gets the pruning. You are so good a branch that God would fain have you better. You have such capacities for bearing fruit, that He wants to see those capacities developed. The lapidary does not place upon the wheel the stone that is not precious, but that which is, and so your affliction is no mark, therefore, of your want of grace, but of your having it. “Every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.”

**3. *Now ye are pruned.***

For so it should be.

**3. *Through the word which I have spoken unto you.***

While Christ was with His disciples, He kept His vine continually pruned by the word which He spoke. That word cut off the non-fruit-bearing branches, for we read that after that saying there were some that went back and walked no more with Him, for they said, “‘This is a hard saying; who can bear it?’” That was the word pruning off the useless branches. And there were others who were grieved by His word. These were good people, and it did them good. It was a godly sorrow that led to bringing forth fruits meet for repentance.

**4. *Abide in me and I in you.***

There is the great canon of the Christian life. Hold fast to Christ. Not only live *with* Him, but live *in* Him. “Abide in me.” And oh! let Jesus not be merely your companion now and then, on holy occasions, but let Him abide in you. Make your heart a temple—let Him find His sweetest rest—His home in you.

**4. *As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.***

It is keeping in Christ, then, that is the vital matter. There is the root of the whole business, to be still one with Jesus by vital union, deriving the sap of our life entirely from Him.

**5. *I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit:***

This double abiding gives a double harvest. Christ in me, and I in Christ—I must be fruitful. Oh! beloved, look well to this. I am afraid we get at a distance from Christ. There is more danger of this in old professors than there is in young beginners. The young beginner is often warm of heart. The very novelty of the thing keeps him near his Master, but oh! take care of slackening. You that have been long pilgrims, take care of slackening. It is so easy to grow cold in this cold world—and it is so hard to maintain the holy spiritual fervor, without which there is no spiritual health.

**5. *He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.***

Not “ye will do *less*,” or, “ye will do *least*,” but you can do *nothing*—nothing good, nothing spiritual, nothing acceptable, if severed from Jesus.

**6. *If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered: and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.***

And oh! how many come to this end! They seemed to be all that the fruit-bearing branches are, but they were never saved souls, for saved souls always bring forth fruits of righteousness. Their salvation is proved by their fruitfulness. But these appeared to be all that the others were, and after a while they were discovered, and cast into the fire and burned.

**7. *If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you,***

My *very words*. You must treasure up Christ’s teaching. You must obey His precepts. If you do this, “Ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.”



In this chapter we are taught once or twice that the power of prayer depends very much upon the closeness of our communion with Christ and the completeness of our obedience to Him. We are saved by faith in the Redeemer, but the joy of salvation, the very dignity and glory of it, will only come to those men who jealously watch themselves, and zealously obey their Lord and Master.

**8-9.** *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you:*

What a glorious word! I scarcely know a text more deep, more full than this. After the same manner as God the Father loves the Son—after that same sort does the Son love us. Hear the words again, “As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you; continue ye in my love.” He confirms us in it and bids us live in the enjoyment of it.

**10.** *If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love.*

You shall know it. You shall live in it—it shall be the atmosphere you breathe.

**10-11.** *Even as I have kept My Father’s commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you.*

Christ would have His people happy—happy, however, with a holy joy which is not, therefore, a dim and second-rate joy. It is the very joy of Christ God’s people are to enjoy.

**11-16.** *That my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.*

A second time He puts this remarkable prevalence of prayer side by side with walking in the Lord’s commandments. Oh! you that miss success in your life and work, may you not trace your failure to your forgetfulness of God? Shall God do your will, if you will not do His will? Shall He wait on you, if you will not wait on Him? Will He not (must you not expect that He will) walk contrary to you if you walk contrary to Him? May His Spirit make you pure in life, for then shall you be successful at the mercy seat!

**17.** *These things I command you, that ye love one another.*

Jesus! send us this spirit of love, we pray You.

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Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at [www.spurgeongems.org](http://www.spurgeongems.org).